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St. Paul's Orthodoxy.

OR

The univerſal Advantage that Goſpel-preaching would be of to Civil Society.

SHEWN IN A

SERMON,

DELIVERED TO A

PROTESTANT-DISSENTING-CHURCH

AT

PINNERS-HALL,

Sunday-Morning *June* 24. 1759.

By CALEB FLEMING,
Paſtor of that Church.

LONDON:

Printed for J. NOON, in the Poultry; and C. HENDERSON, under the Royal-Exchange. 1759.

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Advertiſement.

THE ſolicitation of many of my young friends, has ſubjected this diſcourſe to public inſpection.

Some notes *are added. Thoſe on* bigotry, *ſerve to ſhew the depraved ſtate of theological opinion, among chriſtian profeſſors. Thoſe on the* law of the ſexes, *would expoſe the ſhameful ſhocking violations, whilſt the weal of ſociety does eſſentially and neceſſarily depend on a religious obſervance of that law.—A concern for the virtue and happineſs of the riſing age, I would conſtantly cheriſh, as what may give ſpirit to all my public labours. and would gladly, to the utmoſt of my ability, inculcate principles of a rational piety and devotion, the only ſolid and unſhaken foundation of the hope and confidence of man.*

TITUS II. 15.

THESE THINGS SPEAK AND EXHORT, AND REBUKE WITH ALL AUTHORITY: LET NO MAN DESPISE THEE.

ST. *Paul* is ſuppoſed to have written this epiſtle about the year 56. — the perſon to whom he writes is *Titus*, an idolatrous Greek; converted by him to the chriſtian faith. *Gal.* ii. 3. hence called, *his own ſon*, Tit. i. 4. appointed by him Elder or Biſhop of the church in *Crete* or *Candie*. a fruitful Iſland in the mediterranean-ſea, where this apoſtle had firſt propagated the chriſtian doctrine. The inſtruction which it contains, deſcribes the qualification, ſpirit, and behaviour of Biſhops and Deacons.—the method in which *Titus* is to conduct his public miniſtrations.

Alike

Alike advice is given to *Timothy*, in the firſt epiſtle written to him about the ſame time with this to *Titus*. But as our eccleſiaſtical hiſtorian obſerves, "that is of greater length, becauſe *Timothy* was a young man. *Titus* is older, and of more experience. and did not need a long exhortation." [a]

The occaſion of this Epiſtle was partly owing to falſe teachers having endeavoured to mix Judaical obſervances, and to corrupt the Goſpel ſyſtem. and many, who pretended to know God, did, in works diſgrace their profeſſion. they recommended a licentiouſneſs of manners, and *were void of judgment, concerning good works.* ch. i. 16.

Titus muſt religiouſly enjoyn good works, as well as remonſtrate againſt all immorality. for he is conſtantly to ſpeak thoſe things which become ſound doctrine. ch. ii. 1. which injunction is renewed in my text,—*theſe things ſpeak and exhort, and rebuke with all authority.*

Several inquiries ſhould be made by us. Such as

I. Into

[a] See Dr. *Lardner*'s Supplement, Vol. ii. p. 190, 191.

I. Into the things which *Titus* is to dwell upon, as a chriſtian inſtructor.

II. Into the manner and ſpirit of his addreſs.

III. Into the weight or influence which his teachings ought to have on chriſtian people.

As to the things which *Titus* muſt dwell upon, we may obſerve, that the general ſcheme of the goſpel is ſummed up in the previous context; where the ſalutary grace of God is ſaid to teach, or perſuade men "to deny all ungodlineſs and worldly luſts; "and to live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly "in this preſent world." this being the capital end of Chriſt's mediation, *viz.* "to redeem "men from all iniquity, and purify unto "himſelf a peculiar people, zealous of good "works." *Titus* muſt never propoſe any view of Chriſt's mediation but what manifeſts the grace of God as bringing ſalvation to men, by redeeming them from their vanity, worldlineſs, and luſt; and by animating their zeal for *good works.*

What theſe are, he has very diſtinctly ſhewn in this Epiſtle.—for example, "*aged* "*men* muſt be vigilant and temperate, ſound

"in

" in the faith, in charity, in patience." The *Cretians* were much addicted to intemperance, deceit, and lying. habits not eaſily thrown off in old age. they ſhould purge their minds from avarice, and quit the ſordid, earthly ſpirit. a vice in aged perſons too often ſeen in *matching* their children; wherein they are wont to conſult only external condition. " but they muſt be temperate and " ſound in the faith." And beſides this, " they ſhould be ſound in charity and pa- " tience." not peeviſh, fretful, and complaining under their infirmities: not of a jealous, ſurmiſing, ſuſpicious temper; fatiguing and diſagreeable to all around them.

The *aged women* ought to ſupport a gracefulneſs and dignity of air and deportment, which becomes their years and profeſſion. not countenance goſſipping, tale-bearing, back-biting, and calumny.—" not falſe ac- " cuſers."—They muſt be temperate and moderate in all their refreſhments.—" not " given to much wine."—and they are to employ themſelves continually, " in teach- " ing their families good things." hereby becoming venerable in all their ſphere of influence.

And

And eſpecially ſhould they teach, both by precept and example, the *young women* who are their immediate ward, " to be wiſe, ſo-" ber, chaſte, modeſt, keepers at home; " and to conduct all their family affairs with " prudential care and a diligent overſight." They may not become vain, giddy, roving, wanton; neither confine their attention to dreſs, figure, and amuſement. A taſte for the relaxing, ſporting gaieties of life, ſcenes of diverſion, however they may preſcribe the ſteps and allure the feet of the other ſex, to mingle in ſuch aſſociations and parties of pleaſure; will never perſuade the ſober and thoughtful youth, that theſe aſſemblies thus frequented, can furniſh among the fair, many, who have diſpoſitions that promiſe much for the happineſs of the conjugal ſtate. Pride, humour, indulged paſſions can never train for this felicity. the humble, the meek, the prudent, the pious, all humane diſpoſitions are to be inculcated, in order to form the *fair* for faithfulneſs to their huſbands; and for taking every poſſible method to ſecure their love and eſteem; " that ſo the word of " God may not be blaſphemed."

Thus clearly did St. *Paul* diſcern, that with the *younger women* are entruſted

the moſt important intereſts of families, and the weal of ſociety. and therefore it is, that he chuſeth to be ſo very particular and expreſs in theſe directions.

Titus muſt alſo " exhort *young men* to be " ſober-minded." that is to ſay, they are to attain an eſtabliſhed decency, chaſtneſs, and diſcreetneſs of air and behaviour. " They " ſhould flee youthful luſts," as a man would the plague. and they muſt as eagerly purſue righteouſneſs and purity, or an eſtabliſhed virtue. compare 2 Tim. ii. 22. The imminent danger there is from intemperance, inebriety, indecorums, indecencies, debaucheries and gallantries, is every where viſible in their fell-fruits. [b]

Solomon

[b] The *Britiſh* ſons of pleaſure do not diſcover any underſtanding. they deviate from the plain dictates of nature, in all their libertine, impure embraces. they do their utmoſt to confound the divine order eſtabliſhed in the intercourſe of the ſexes. they violate the very firſt law of ſociety. and I will preſume to propheſy of that people whom they ſo exactly copy after, I mean, the *French nation*, that if I am rightly informed, they muſt inevitably, by their gallantries, bring on a total ruin of that monarchy.—Dr. *Leland* in his hiſtory, *of the life of Philip of Macedon*, has obſerved, ſuch conſequences did take place in ancient *greece*, even among the moſt brave and celebrated of thoſe people; for ſais he, " when every " part

Solomon has deſerved the name of a wiſe man, rather from the rules he has laid down, and the obſervation he had made of mankind, than from his own example. he has however, from coſtly experience, labored to impreſs the minds of youth, by expoſing the lure and enchantment of pleaſure. youth ſhould ſtatedly conſult ſome of the firſt chapters of his book of proverbs.

Again, "*Servants* muſt be obedient to "their own maſters; and to pleaſe them "well in all things; not gainſaying." not ſaucily or pertly anſwering again:—"not "purloining." no way embezzling or waſting his goods, or injuring his property.—The religious ſervant will always ſtudy the intereſt of his maſter; and ſhew all good fidelity, "that he may adorn the doctrine of "God his ſavior in all things."

"part of the government of *Athens* betrayed a total cor-"ruption and depravity, at the eve of its downfal. a "love for public ſpectacles was the firſt thing which the "youth were taught. There every object which could "inflame their paſſions was preſented to their view: they "hung with effeminate pleaſure on the muſical airs—"they waſted their time in wanton dalliance.—they la-"viſhed their fortune and vigour in an infamous com-"merce.—their love of money, or their incapacity for "more rational entertainments engaged them in "*gaming*." *

* Vol. I. p. 86.

Subjects muſt alſo ſhew a reverence of the civil magiſtrate, whether ſupreme or ſubordinate. be dutiful in their ſeveral ſtations, and religiouſly obſerve the laws and ordinances that are needful to the ſupport of government. They may not ever be concerned in conſpiracies, ſeditions, inſurrections and rebellions againſt a juſt and legal authority; "but be ready to every good work:" as heartily concerned for the public ſafety and happineſs.

The univerſal, perpetual duty of chriſtians, is, "that they ſpeak evil of no man: "but are gentle, and ſhew meekneſs to e-"very one." [c]

The

[c] The ſpirit of *bigotry*, the inflamed animoſity found among profeſſors, occaſioned wholly by ſome abſurd ſpeculation, or inexplicable myſtery; on account of which they defame, cenſure, and condemn the rational objector; is not, in any wiſe conſiſtent with this univerſal obligation. verily the affectation of orthodoxy, from an attachment to ſome human ſyſtem, has ever been the excitement of an unholy zeal, hateful and hurtful to mankind.

Dr. *S. Chandler* in his ſermon *on the ſigns of the times*, thus expreſſes himſelf — "how zealous for their own "forms and ſpeculations, to what unſcriptural height "they carry the diſtinguiſhing opinions they have em-"braced, what abſurdities they advance in the explica-"tion and defence of them, how rigidly they confine "their very charity to thoſe of their own party, how "dogma-

The ſocial virtues and duties are nevertheleſs, *the things* which *Titus* muſt recommend and enjoyn, as what do conſtitute the very eſſence of orthodoxy. They, verily, give the true complexion, of what the *canting*-teacher is wont to call, *the ſtrain of evangelical preaching.* They are of infinite moment and conſequence to the benefit and emolument of the world, and ſo to the honour of the chriſtian profeſſion.

This ſhall ſuffice for the firſt head of inquiry.

II. We are to examine into the ſpirit and manner of the addreſs. — *theſe things ſpeak and exhort, and rebuke with all authority.*

To *ſpeak*, will import, the uſe made of the reaſoning powers in addreſſing the vulgar. it ſignifies the endeavour to convince, by removing ignorance and prejudice; giving information to the judgment, by repreſenting the nature and force of evidence in its divinely

"dogmatically and preſumptuouſly they annex damna-
"tion and ſalvation to their own tenets, how rigidly
"they impoſe them on all who are to expect their friend-
"ſhip."—p. 36. Here is nothing of the gentleneſs and meekneſs of Chriſt, or of the chriſtian towards all men. the perſecuting pagan or papiſt has as good a claim to chriſtianity: and yet, theſe men will have it, *they preach* Chriſt; and *are ſound in the faith.*

vinely moral direction. — ſo I ſhould underſtand the term, *ſpeak*, as denoting the labours of argumentation, or perſuaſion levelled at the common people.[d]

And *exhort*. the Greek word [e] has an affectionate vehemence in it, which diſcovers warmth of paſſion. the ſpeaker's heart is engaged, and he is extremely deſirous to influence his hearer. the friendly, benevolent ſpirit breathes in the addreſs. a ſolicitude is ſhewn for the welfare of the perſons exhorted. The ſame word is rendered, *beſeech*, Rom. xii. 1. 2 Cor. v. 20. ch. vi. 1. The exhortation is ſuited to excite the deſires, and to enliven and actuate the hopes of men. their duty and intereſt are ſo deſcribed as to engage the heart, and obtain its approbation.

Rebuke with all authority. this can have nothing at all to do with thoſe ſpeculative opinions which have no hurtful or bad influence on the morals of men. but the reproof is to alarm and arouze from ſtupidity, to ſtimulate ſhame, to animate remorſe and penitence; becauſe of folly, vice and impiety. Now this, from the reaſon and nature of the thing, is done *with all authority*; becauſe ſin and folly deform and deſtroy humanity.

It

[d] Leigh's Crit. Sacr. in Verb. λεγω.

[e] παρακαλεω.

It is confeſſedly right and reaſonable; for as much as no man ſcruples to arraign and condemn *lying*, *theft*, and *murder:* they are capital violations of truth, property and life. *Slander*, *fornication*, *adultery* are not leſs ſo: theſe have equally malign tendencies. — a chriſtian inſtructor is then authorized to rebuke vice, by the conſent of ſociety, by the conſtitution of nature, and by the expreſs voice of revelation. every divine reaſon conſpire to give him authority, in cenſuring and condemning immorality. the moſt generous principles fill the reprover with an abhorrence of ſin, and raiſe in him the moſt dreadful apprehenſions of its final conſequences! ſo that *Titus* is, with the utmoſt reaſon, enjoyned to rebuke with all authority.[f]

The

[f] It deſerves to be noticed, that there is not any thing more expreſsly condemned in the teachings of our Lord and of his apoſtles, than every degree of domination and tyranny over faith and conſcience. no man in all the world has authority either to place another in the divine favour, or to exclude him the mercy of his maker. All prieſtly uſurpations fell at the feet of Jeſus. and the power to ſave and to deſtroy, is determined only by perſonal character. Matt. xx. 23. The apoſtolic *binding* and *looſing*; their *power of the keys*, could only reſpect the terms of acceptance by the Goſpel publication. for when this Goſpel was once publiſhed, the keys of the kingdom were equally and as truly put into the hands of every chriſtian laic, as they could be into the hands of any chriſtian cleric.

The word rendered, *authority*, is ſometimes tranſlated, *commandment*. Rom. xvi. 26. 1 Cor. vii. 6, 25. 2 ep. vi. 8. 1 Tim. i. 1. Tit. i. 3. And as this does frequently denote the Goſpel, *Titus* has countenance therefrom in rebuking; or he may and ſhould, in conformity to this divine ſcheme, cenſure and condemn whatever is vicious and immoral.

Should we ſuppoſe that he muſt *ſpeak* and *exhort* as well as *rebuke* with all authority, it will implunge us in no ſort of difficulty; becauſe whatever is reaſonable and regular, ſocial and moral is of divine obligation. Do but only attend to the ſermon on the mount, you will there find the great duties of piety and humanity recommended and enforced by their everlaſting tendencies. The very reaſon aſſigned why men had *Jeſus* in ſuch high veneration, as a teacher, was, "that he taught as one having authority; "and not as the ſcribes."—There was a perfect knowledge of the moral ſyſtem, and its infinite importance plainly ſeen in his teachings; but not at all diſcoverable in the inſtructions of the ſcribes.

He moreover ſhews, that thoſe moral virtues and ſocial duties were not generated by

by the Goſpel-Inſtitution, but had been obligatory in every age of the world; and could never be altered or changed by any diſpenſation whatſoever. He even denominates them, *the law and the prophets.* Math. v. 17. and declares, *till heaven and earth paſs, one jot or tittle ſhall in no wiſe paſs.* In like manner his apoſtle has ſpoken of the Goſpel, ſo as to ſhew its moral and immutable obligation: *Jeſus Chriſt the ſame yeſterday, to-day, and for ever.* Heb. xiii. 8. The ſeveral branches of truth have their re-eſtabliſhment, and are recovered from the corrupt gloſſes that had been put upon them. they are reſcued from thoſe violations which cuſtom had countenanced in the world. What had been ſaid of them by corrupt men in corrupt times, was very daring and impious. But the great reſtoring prophet of God, revives the native dignity and glory of the divine precept, and points out its ſpirit, purity, and power.

We might here pertinently obſerve, that did but men fix their attention to the practical and moral, which is the ſaving deſign of the Goſpel, they would have neither leiſure nor inclination to employ themſelves in the futile labours of doubtful diſputations. but verily, ſuch have been, ſuch yet are the in-

fatuations and extravagant fondneſſes for an eſtabliſhed *credenda* and a current orthodoxy, that to rub off the ruſt of popular ſyſtem, which as a canker has eaten deep into the minds of men, does greatly increaſe the difficulty of public inſtruction. the prejudices are ſtubborn and obſtinate, and leave little hopes of ſucceſs to thoſe teachers, who would form their diſcourſes upon St. *Paul*'s rational plan of preaching Chriſt.

III. Some notice ſhould be taken of the influence and weight which ſuch teachings ought to have on a chriſtian people.— *let no man deſpiſe thee.*

Titus however muſt be religiouſly careful of his own conduct. "he ſhould be blameleſs "as the ſteward of God; not ſelf-willed, "not ſoon angry, not given to wine, not "quarelſome; not covetous; but a lover of "hoſpitality, a lover of good men: ſober, "juſt, holy, temperate; holding faſt the "faithful word:" which if he did, it would be at the peril of any ſhould they deſpiſe him. In a world where *example* has ſuch mighty influence, it is not likely that any ſhould venerate, and feel juſt impreſſions from the moſt elegant as well as rational inſtructions,

ſtructions, when recommended by men of bad ſpirits, immoral lives, and ill examples. we cannot eaſily ſuppoſe the *orator* in earneſt or ſincere, in exhorting us to duties which he himſelf does not perform; or that he meaneth any thing by his reproofs and rebukes, who does not ſcruple any of thoſe indulgences which he openly cenſures and condemns. ſee Rom. ii. 17—24. As little reaſon have we to imagine, that thoſe *teachers* who ſubſcribe to opinions which they do not believe, and who pay their homage upon a plan, that they in judgment diſapprove, can ever propagate the divine importance of *ſincerity*; or convince their hearers, that *hypocriſy* is hateful in the eye of God.

Public teachers of any denomination, are errant triflers, who can play with truth for the ſake of ſordid gain, or can do homage to that idol, *popularity*. And *they are blind leaders of the blind* who ſtudy to countenance and cheriſh, rather than correct and cure, the ignorance, ſuperſtition and prejudice of the people. their maxims of policy and prudence will one day be tremendous, at leaſt, to themſelves. ſee Ezek. xiii. 18. 19. Gal. i. 10.[s]

s Dr. *Chandler*, in the forecited ſermon, has this e-
qually

But when the ſocial virtues, and the duties of piety and humanity are recommended by a ſincere, conſiſtent and exemplary *Titus*, it would be at the peril of the people ſhould they neglect or deſpiſe his inſtructions; becauſe in the ſound doctrine which he delivered, there would be all the energy of divine authority that can poſſibly ariſe from nature, reaſon, and God, in his addreſs.

REFLECTIONS.

1. Would any man carefully read this Epiſtle, he muſt own, that the writer had an undoubted

qually ſhocking ſuggeſtion, p. 38. — "if the ſervices of "devotion ſhould be any of them *exceptionable* in their "nature, and frequently performed by thoſe who diſ-"reliſh them, or do not believe the principles they are "founded on; if objections are hereby raiſed againſt "the INTEGRITY of the miniſters of religion, and "their influence to do good, and the ſucceſs of their "public miniſtrations is hereby greatly prevented."—

Lord *Clarendon*'s averſion to Proteſtant-diſſenters, who would not conform to this *Liturgy*, led him to think all men ſhould conclude, "that nothing but a "ſevere execution of the law can ever prevail upon "that *claſſis* of men to conform to government." * — what wonder, when he was ſo devoted to a King who did deteſt the preſbyterians.† but had exceſſive grace for *Jeſuits*. ‡

* See continuation of his life, Vol. ii. p. 143. octavo edition.

† P. 300. ‡ P. 272.

undoubted claim to *divine inſpiration.* The thorough knowledge of mankind; the vaſt, the comprehenſive views taken of the duties of humanity; the matchleſs ſkill in expoſing the prejudices, follies, and vices of men; the motive and argument ſo happily thrown in to enforce the duty; the connexion and certain conſequence of the prevalence of chriſtianity, to wit, the welfare of the world under all its genuine impreſſion; has nothing to compare with it in the writings of antiquity. And one may venture to affirm, that the whole ſpirit and deſign of the Goſpel-ſyſtem, is fully and clearly expreſſed in this ſhort epiſtle. But ſurely no man whatſoever could have communicated ſo much heavenly inſtruction in ſo narrow a compaſs, and with ſuch energy, perſpicuity and preciſion too, had he not been under a divine illumination.

2. The genuine intention of a Goſpel-miniſtry, is, to conſult and promote the rectitude and reformation of the world. among other things, the very particular and emphatical inſtruction which *Titus* is to give, about the education and behaviour of *younger women,* is in evidence of the great advantage which the Goſpel-doctrine would be of to civil ſociety. There is a delicacy and ſtrength

ſtrength in the addreſs, much too maſterly to be matched by any of the celebrated orators of *Greece* or *Rome*. there is a purity and perfection in the advice, founded on reaſon, truth, nature, and extenſive obſervation.[h]

This

[h] The care St. *Paul* has taken, in his Epiſtle, to inculcate upon females, that *ſubordinacy* and *ſubjection* of the ſex, on which the happineſs of the conjugal ſtate abſolutely depends, is an irrefragable argument of his inflexible regard to TRUTH, and the full perſuaſion he had of its divine energy. ſee his injunctions Eph. v. 22. 24. Col. iii. 18. 1 Cor. vii. 31. ch. xi. 8. 9. which are in full proof how well he underſtood, and how perfectly he has repreſented nature. for verily, the good influence of the *wife*, her real importance will ever be found in the ſphere of her ſubordinacy: becauſe whenever ſhe quits rank and appointment, in the conjugal ſtate, ſhe diſturbs the order of the ſyſtem of nature, and no more attends to the law of her creator. On the other hand, the more obſervant ſhe is of the pleaſure and taſte of her huſband, the more ſhe conſults his peace, reputation and honour, the more ſhe ſecures her own.

This is not only the doctrine of St. *Paul*, but of St. *Peter* who has expreſsly ſhewn the divine demand of this ſubjection. and obſerves, that the *meek* and *quiet ſpirit* of the wife, is a far more illuſtrious and captivating charm, than all her bodily figure, or the richeſt ornament of her dreſs. nay, that this is *even in the ſight of God, of great price.* 1 Pet. iii. 1—6.

We might add, that the marriage contract admitting of no divorce, except in the caſe of adultery; a doctrine

taught

This epiſtle, in ſome of its ſtrictures, does point out the great hand which *younger women* muſt

taught by Jeſus, in direct contradiction to the eſtabliſhed cuſtom of *Jews*, *Greeks* and *Romans*; is another convincing argument of the divinity of the Goſpel-ſyſtem; ſince it did not connive at, but condemn all thoſe corruptions.

The *ladies* have a cogent reaſon to venerate the bleſſed Jeſus, for reſtoring the ſacred rites of marriage to their priſtine ſpirit and obligation; which no longer leave the wife expoſed to the capricious and cruel treatment of the huſband, who was wont to diſcard, or repudiate at his pleaſure.

But though the huſband may not divorce his wife, ſave for the cauſe of her defiling his bed; yet is ſhe obliged to ſubject herſelf to him in all things, or in every lawful thing. Eph. v. 24. ſhe muſt reverence and obey him. Tit. ii. 5. for he is her head, as Chriſt is head of the church; to direct, govern, protect and defend her. Eph. v. 23. 1 Cor. xi. 3.

Yet the ſovereignty of the huſband is ſuch, which obliges him "to live with his wife according to pru-"dence, as with the weaker veſſel; and to pay her the "honours which are due to a fellow-heir of the grace "of life." 1 *Pet.* iii. 7. — he muſt follow his ſecular affairs with diligence, and uſe his ſubſtance with frugality, that he may make a decent and fit proviſion for his wife and family. 1 Cor. vii. 33. — he muſt love her with a pure and chaſte affection; allowing no rival in his eſteem. Eph. v. 25.— He muſt not ſhew any bitterneſs, ill-nature, or ſeverity towards her. Col. iii. 19. — he muſt love her *as his own fleſh.* Eph. v. 29.

Thus

muſt always have, either in the reformation, or in the ruin of the world. Perſuaded I am that to the married and unmarried of the *younger fair*, we muſt look for the taſte, complexion and condition of the age. Nor am I ſingular in this opinion. a moſt celebrated and polite writer of our own country, thus ſpeaks of the ſex—" they compoſe, ſais he, " half the world; and are, by the com- " plaiſance of our nation, the moſt power- " ful part of the people." Again, " as vi- " vacity is the gift of women; gravity is " that of men." and *once more*,—" the ut- " moſt of a woman's character, is contained " in domeſtic life: ſhe is blameable or " praiſe-

Thus amply is the happineſs of the conjugal ſtate provided for by the Goſpel-injunction. And wherever by humour or paſſion that ſtate is made unhappy, the delinquent deſerves not the name of chriſtian.*

This is the New Teſtament doctrine of marriage, and one of the intrinſic evidences of its divine authority, which will admit of no confutation. ſo far therefore as men are genuine chriſtians, they obſerve this firſt law of ſociety: they make conſcience not to violate the obligation. and on the contrary, ſo far as men indulge themſelves in a violation, they exclude themſelves the kingdom of God. 1 Cor. vi. 9. *be not deceived, neither fornicators, nor adulterers, ſhall inherit the kingdom of God.*

* Conſult Dr. *James Foſter*'s diſcourſes, on the duties of the married ſtate, Vol. ii. ch. 3.

" praiſe-worthy according as her carriage af-
" fects the houſe of her father, or that of
" her huſband. all ſhe has to do in this
" world, is contained within the duties of a
" daughter, a ſiſter, a wife and a mother.
" all theſe may be well performed, though
" ſhe ſhould not be the fineſt woman at an
" *opera*, nor figure moſt in an aſſembly.—
" but when they place their ambition on cir-
" cumſtances, wherein to excell is no addi-
" tion to what is truly commendable, where
" can this end, but in making the gratifica-
" tions of life, laſt no longer than youth and
" good fortune." [i]

How well has the *Spectator* copied St. *Paul?* and I hope both the elder and younger *fair* of this Audience will receive the inſtruction.—Conſult your own virtue, reputation and importance; do it for the good of mankind, by excelling in the province heaven has ordained you. ſhine more and more in the diſtinct circles of your influence and uſefulneſs. deſire no figure, demand no gratification, but what circumſtance, condition, and ſtation will honeſtly and honourably allow.

D Your

[i] Spectator. No. 4. 128, and 342.

Your moſt raiſed attainments in true piety and religious virtue, will be diſcovered in the attention you give to domeſtic and ſocial duties.—you are not intended by heaven for the cloiſtered confinement of the romiſh recluſe, gone mad with ſuperſtition; but to be employed in the uſeful ſcenes of humanity, and to contribute your ſhare to the pleaſure and delight of mankind.

By this view given of your duty, St. *Paul* has condemned the whole ſyſtem of popiſh devotion: ſince the more uſeful you are in your families and in ſociety, the more *holy* will you be, as well as the more happy.

3. We are hence inſtructed in what is meant by *ſound doctrine.* It is far remote from myſteries, unintelligible opinion about the perſon, office, or appointment of Jeſus. for whatever repreſentations are made concerning him that are doubtful, obſcure, or perplexing, they have nothing in them that can belong to ſound doctrine. the very account of his mediation, as it lies in the new teſtament, is ſimple, plain and moral. It has nothing at all to do with his appeaſing or placating God: but is employed in purifying men from iniquity, and rendering them

them a peculiar people, in their zeal for good works. To what purpoſe then ſhould any man pleaſe himſelf with aſcribing honours to Jeſus, only due to God? or ſhew a zeal about the iniquities of men being imputed to Chriſt, at the time he is conſcious of allowed crime, and of indulged luſt. the redeemed of the Lord are none but ſuch, *who adorn the doctrine of God their ſavior in all things.*

It is aſked, why have chriſtians ſo generally ſwallowed the abſurd opinion, of a transfer of merit and righteouſneſs?—I ſhould anſwer, many, I hope, have done it only from the prejudice of education. yet ſome, it is to be feared, like it much better than the laborious ſcheme of mortifying every luſt, and ſubduing every paſſion, that is irregular and exceſſive. they affect greater humility, than to work out their own ſalvation. and they had much rather rejoice in the work of another, than in proving their own. Theſe hold the opinion, becauſe they would hold their luſts.—*Others*, whom I will call, the polite and faſhionable world, think it quite enough, that they are like one another. they conceive it vain and aſſuming,

to aim at a greater decorum and regularity than that of thoſe around them. this truly, they think, is *to be righteous over much.* and if you will needs have them provide better, than they ſeem to do, againſt a final reckoning; they are perfectly well ſatisfied with a SUBSTITUTE. and they fancy that a confidence in him, is *the faith once delivered to the ſaints.*

4. If St. *Paul* could teach *Titus*, we know what it is *to preach Chriſt.* It is to repreſent the whole of the Goſpel ſcheme as practical and moral; what has a principal concern with our tempers and lives. To *preach Chriſt*, is to exhort men not to receive the grace of God in vain—to keep themſelves from all pollutions—to be free from all worldlineſs; and to be *zealous of good works.*[k]

Chriſtians

[k] The ἀδόκιμοι of whom St. *Paul* ſpeaks, ch. i. 16. are ſuch, whom our *Antinomians* follow, in their opinions. all wicked profeſſors do reſemble them in practice. Advocates for imputed righteouſneſs, though they may not deſignedly encourage vice, yet they weaken and ſap the foundations of morality: they render *good works* of no effect. for they look upon them with diſguſt, as upon filthy rags. and whilſt they rave

Chriſtians alas! in ſpight of all remonſtrance, will, many of them conform to the evil cuſtoms, maxims, and manners of the age. Some of theſe will not let the *church* exerciſe dominion over their conſciences; and yet will let the *world* tyrannize over their hearts. this is a ſtrange abſurdity. yet ſo it is: though the Lord of chriſtians would have taught them much better. YE CANNOT SERVE TWO MASTERS.

An heathen could ſay, "would you have "theſe great things for nothing? I ſuppoſe "you would. but how can you? one buſi- "neſs does not ſuit with another. you can- "not beſtow your cares both upon externals, "and upon your own ruling faculty too: "but if you would have the former, e'en "let the latter alone, or you will ſucceed "in

rave againſt human reaſon, and depreciate the abilities of man's agency, they are moſt noiſy in telling the people, that none but they are found preaching Chriſt.—The apoſtle will have *Titus* "affirm conſtantly that "they who have believed in God might be careful to "maintain good works; theſe things are good and pro- "fitable unto men." ch. iii. 8. So that all *antinomians* hold the reverſe opinion with St. *Paul*, and teach a ſyſtem only fit for unbelievers.

" in neither, while you are drawn different " ways towards both." [1]

We hence learn, both from reaſon and revelation, that the teachings of divine truth are clear, diſtinct and intelligible. and whatever any may ſay of preaching Chriſt, he only does it who ſhews, " that the ſalva- " tion of God conſiſts, in a man's deliver- " ance from the dominion of luſt, and in " his devotedneſs to truth and righteouſneſs." —unleſs the reliſhes and taſtes become heavenly, and we are actuated by the ſpirit of purity and love; the moſt admiring ſentiments of the Goſpel ſcheme, however full we are of devotion, will furniſh no ground of felicity better than that of the *fool's paradiſe*; and will finally turn out the moſt fatal of all deluſions.

Thus are we led to pity the ignorant, the proud, conceited, aſſuming *Enthuſiaſt*, who ſcornfully calls the moral, *a legal preacher.* and affects to ſpeak of morality itſelf in terms of contempt. though he is not able to ſhew any thing in all the Goſpel worthy of God to give, or of man to receive, when you ſeparate from it the moral influence or intention.

5. What-

[1] Carter's Epictetus, p. 415, 416.

5. Whatever may be the vanity and levity of men, who affect inattentions and indifferences to Gospel-teachings, its truth is immutable, and its authority divine. The unprejudiced, impartial eye will confess, if the whole scheme both exhibits and enforces moral obligation — if the universal design and tendency be to conciliate to truth, righteousness, and goodness—if it be to remove all prejudice from the human breast; and if it would correct every passion that disturbs the order and peace of families and larger Societies; it must then be of God. And if this be not the design, there is none obvious to the discernment of man.

But if it evidently has this direct, uniform tendency, every one who neglects its instruction, or despises its authority, neglects and despises TRUTH itself: and cannot but be exposed to the displeasure of the God of truth. [m]

[m] Heb. ii. begining. John xii. 48, 49.

THE END.